

# LETTER

Occasioned by the second LETTER to  
Dr. BURNET,

Written to a Friend.

SIR,

I Saw another nameless Paper directed to me two days ago; and indeed it was so dull, and so little to the purpose, that I laid it aside as unworthy of an Answer. But you have perswaded me once more to put Pen to Paper, tho' not to satisfy such a Trifler, who would pretend to Wit, if he knew how to lay his Claim to it; but it is so coarse, and his good Nature and Candor are so conspicuous, that I did not wonder to hear a witty Gentleman say, That I had certainly hired one to write it; but I scarce know where I could have found out such another. I do not trouble my self to ask after his Name; for till he gives himself one, I must let all lie where I laid it before, since his Protestations, without a Name set to them, are things of as little weight as he that makes them, and must go for nothing; as certainly he that writes them, is one of the next things to nothing.

But since I understand, that some who have read the Papers that have passed in this matter, desire to see the whole thing fairly stated, which, in such Points of Fact, is of more force than all other Discourses can possibly be; I will set it in a clear light, and then it will appear what a sort of Men I have to do with, who will so obstinately keep up a Noise where there is no Cause or Colour given for it. The state of the whole thing is this:

In King Henry the eighth's time, the method that was taken while the Points of Religion were under Consideration, was this: A Matter

A

was

was put into Queries, and these were given out to some Bishops, and other Divines, who by a set day were required to bring in their Answers to those Queries under their hands; and then these being examined and compared, they went on to determine it. So when the Sacraments came to be enquired into, there were seventeen Queries drawn up, and given out to a select number of Bishops and Doctors, the last of these happened to be concerning Extreme unction. Some of these relate to Church-Power; as, *Whether the Apostles lacking a higher Power, as in not having a Christian King among them, made Bishops by that necessity, or by authority given by God? Whether Bishops or Priests were first? Whether a Bishop hath Authority by the Scripture to make a Priest, or no? And whether any other, but only a Bishop may make a Priest? Whether in the New Testament be required any Consecration of a Bishop and Priest, or only appointing to the Office be sufficient? And whether, if it fortune, that a Christian Prince, having none but temporal learned Men with him, conquered Infidels, if it was forbid by the Law of God, that he and they should preach and teach the Word of God there, or no? And also make and constitute Priests, or no?* The like Question is put in Case that all the Bishops and Priests of a Kingdom were dead; *Whether the King of that Region should make Bishops and Priests to supply the same, or no?*

To these Queries *Cræmer* gave Answers, that these be then thought, "That Bishops and Priests derived their Authority from the King, as much as Officers of State, Mayors and Sheriffs do; That Ordination was only a decent Form of Admission; that Princes might dispense with it, and that no Grace was given in it, any more than in the committing Civil Offices; and that what the Apostles did, was only by reason of the extraordinary Measure of the Spirit of God, that was in them; to which the People that had then no Christian Prince to govern them, did freely submit, considering the Apostles not as Men that had any Empire or Dominion over them, but as good Counsellors. So he thought Bishops and Priests were at first the same thing, and one Office; and that Princes as well as Bishops, might make Priests; and that Consecration was not necessary by Scripture to make one a Bishop, or a Priest; but that Election, or appointing thereto was sufficient. And that in Cases of Necessity, Christian Princes might make Bishops and Priests.

The Archbishop of York differed from *Cræmer*, and argued these Points copiously, considering the Nature of those Papers; and proved "That the Apostles had Power from Christ to ordain Bishops and Priests;

“and that no other Authority was required for doing that, but that which they derived from God; and that a Bishop is the Overseer of the Priests, who are the Shepherds of particular Flocks; which distinction he said was derived from the Apostles and the primitive Church; and asserted, That none but Bishops or Priests could make a Priest: And by a great many Arguments both from the Old and New Testament, he prove, that Consecration was necessary, and that Appointment without it was neither convenient nor sufficient; and that tho in cases of necessity any Christian, tho a Lay-man, might preach and baptize, yet he could not make a Priest: for no Authority that comes from the Holy Ghost can be used by any Man, unless he has a Commission for it grounded in Scripture Tradition, or ancient Use, and that this Authority was only committed by Scripture to the Apostles, and was from them derived to their Successors.

All the other Bishops and Divines, except the Bishop of St. Davids, whose Paper is lost, agreed with the Archbishop of York in most of his Opinions, only some of other Divines, *Leighton* in particular, thought that a Christian Prince's Consent ought to have been asked by the Apostles, if there had been any at that time, before they had gone to make Bishops and Priests. In the Point of Bishops and Priests being the same thing, or a distinct Office at first, *Leighton* it seems, was doubtful, for he says nothing to it. *Robertson* thinks, that a Priest may consecrate a Bishop, if a Bishop cannot be found. The Bishop of St. Davids, *Thirleby* the eldest Bishop of Westminster, *Cox* and *Redmayn* thought that Bishops and Priests were all one in the beginning; and both *Bonner*, Bishop of London, and *Edgeworth* agreed with *Robertson* in this, That a Priest might consecrate a Bishop, if a Bishop could not be found. As to the necessity of Consecration, *Robertson* yields it, but thinks the Office so given can never be used without the Consent or Permission of the Magistrates, which Limitation is not added by *Leighton*. In Cases of Necessity both *Leighton* and *Robertson*, as well as many others, think the Prince may make Bishops and Priests.

After they had all given their Answer to the seventeen Queries, every Man, except the Bishop of Rochester, signed his Paper; and *Cranmer* not only set his Hand to his own Paper with that modest Qualification, That he did not temerariouly define, but referred the Judgement of it wholly to his Majesty; But set his Name likewise to *Leighton's* Paper, which has given the Rise to all this Noise; and set it also to *Robertson's*, which the late Scribblers have not thought

thought fit to observe, tho they could not but see it; for it is in the same Page with the other. Upon this, some have hastily inferred, that because *Cranmer's* Name is at *Leighton's* Paper, therefore he retracted his own Paper, and subscribed to his Opinions. I have by other clear and unexceptionable Evidences proved That *Cranmer* did indeed change his Opinion in those tender Points: but as if there were a Spirit of Contradiction in some People, they will not accept of this, but will lay hold of this slight Colour of his signing *Leighton's* Paper, on which I laid no weight; and therefore tho I printed the Papers to a Title as I found them in the Manuscript, yet I took no notice of this in my History: so howsoever I might be accused for passing it over in my Discourse concerning it, there was no reason to accuse me for Unfaithfulness in my Collections: but that Part of my Book galls some People, as giving a Credit to the whole History, and therefore they must accuse my Fidelity in that, upon which the Credit of the Book is founded; otherwise there were no considerable Service done. And it would give a specious Colour beyond Sea to disparage that Work, to say, that Divines of (or rather in) the Church of England, have detected my Unfaithfulness in publishing the Records, for that strikes at all; So a Man that was resolved to have a Coach and six Horses at any Rate, at last found out a Journey-man to do this Piece of Work for him; and he has very probably, entred it into the particular of his Merits.

*Cranmer's* subscribing these Papers cannot be understood to be his assenting to all the Opinions contained in them, for they differ in several particulars from one another; and he could not subscribe Contradictions. And tho he had assented to their Opinions, it does not clear him of that for which the Presbyterians, or the Erastians may vouch him; for in the main Point that relates to Presbytery, concerning Bishops and Priests being at first the same Office, which *Cranmer* had asserted, *Leighton* saies nothing to it (See *Collect. p. 225.*) so *Cranmer* retracts nothing upon this Head; and *Robertson* thinks, that where a Bishop cannot be had, a Priest may consecrate a Bishop, which is also a main Point: *Hollikewise* thinks, that a Church-man ought not to use or exercise his Function, without the Consent or Permission of the Magistrate, which is all that most Erastians plead for: so if this Subscription is a good Argument, *Cranmer* is theirs still; and both *Robertson* and *Leighton* think, that in Cases of Necessity Princes may make both Bishops and Priests, and I know few Erastians that plead for more.

Thus

Thus it is plain, that suppose it were granted that *Cranmer* had by signing these Papers subscribed to the Opinions contained in them, he may still be cited both by Presbyterians and *Erastians*, so that if it were not for the other Evidences that I gave of his changing his Mind, which no person had ever observed before me, he might still be cited by them, notwithstanding these Subscriptions. All that I can make of the Subscriptions is, that he might according to a Rule that some Ministers of State have observ'd, set his Hand to those Papers, as a mark that they might not be altered: and as to *Leighton's* Paper, there may be this particular reason for it, that *Leighton* not being in the Commission, of which I take notice in my History, p. 189. *Cranmer*, who it seems ordered him to write Answers to those Queries, might have set his hand to his Paper, as a warrant to him for having writ them, I confess these are but conjectures; but to guess somewhat probably, is all that can be done at this distance.

I have now opened this matter so particularly, that I hope I have satisfied the desires of those who complained that the thing was left so much in the dark.

As for the method in which I published them, I could make a short defence for it, since it is well known that a very eminent Person took the direction of that whole Work into his particular care; but since I am not so near him as to obtain his leave for naming him, and that I will not do it without his leave, I shall tell the reasons that were suggested, for following the method in which I have published them. The method in which they lie in the Manuscript is this, first the Queries are set down, then every Man's Paper comes, first Arch-Bishop *Cranmer's*, then the Arch-Bishop of *York's*, and so forward according to the order in which they are under every Query: All these Papers are Sign'd at the end of them, except the Bishop of *Ra-*  
*chester's*, but there is but one Signing for all, and there are no special Subscriptions to any particular Articles (as some have fancied,) so that the Subscription to the last Article belongs to the whole Paper, and to every Article in it: After these come two Papers, the one in *Latine* and the other in *Englisk*, in which the agreement or disagreement of them all is marked; *Cranmer's* only excepted; so that it seems these were for his private use: Now, since every Paper relates to the Queries without repeating them, the Queries must either have been repeated to every Paper, or the Reader must have been always turning Leaves to find them out; and if any Man had the curiosity to examine their agreement or disagreement, he could



find it out much readier in the way in which they are put than if I had followed the method in which they lie in the Manuscript; and these Papers in which they are already compared, come in more naturally at the end of every Query: and can be more easily examined when one has under his eye at one view all their Opinions, than if they had come in at the end of all after all the Papers had been set down; so that this Method very well becomes the exactness and the true Judgment of him that advised it. On the Margens every Man's Name is set over against every Article of his Paper; so that if one will read a whole Paper in an entire Thread as it lies in the Original, he has an easy work, and is only to seek *Cambridge, York, or any other*, all through the 17 Queries, and he finds it without any confusion or difficulty.

And now, what is to be said to all this? Is there any thing here left out, or mangled, or disguised, or any thing else done sufficient to justify a small part of the Clamour that is raised? The reflections made in this last Letter on the Dean of *St. Pauls*, are too visible to be carried off with the good words that introduce them; if he had writ his Book after my History, it might have been pretended that I had mislead him, though these Gentlemen's Friends know to their Cost that he is not apt to mistake in his Quotations; but he who writ his Book almost Twenty years before mine, and had the Manuscript so long in his hands, saw it as it is; and therefore all that is said from this against the Method that I took in publishing these Papers, is meer fooling: But the truth is, the Dean saw well enough that there was nothing in all this matter that deserved to be taken notice of.

*His Arguments, such as they be*, is a Civility that he had no reason to expect from any on this side the Water. A Man may differ from him both in Opinion and Argument; and yet none but he that can *Drawconfr* like, kill both Friend and Foe, and arraign a whole Nation, would treat a Man of his worth in so rude a manner; but as the Devil is known by his Cloven-Foot, so the attacking such Men is a little too early and too bare-fac'd. If I was guilty of a mistake in my last Letter, I will acknowledg it as soon as the Author of this gives himself a Name; and if ever he on whom I laid it, finds but half the reason to lay any Paper to my charge, that I have here, I will allow him all the liberty he shall be pleased to take: but I will say nothing upon an Anonymous Paper. I confess I acquit him freely of any accession to this; for I believe, though he would set about

but he could not bring his stile so low, nor write so ill. I do not trouble my self to find out the Author. *Dull and pers* are such common Characters, that without a more particular mark I cannot trace him. I confess a fit of kindness he falls into upon my naming the *Blessed Martyr*, leads me a little nearer, for I remember I saw a Dedication to the second Peer of *England*, that began MY DEAR BOARD; upon which one askt if the Author was Married to him: himself he will be as good as his Word, and pay me the Ten Thousand Thanks in full tale for every time that he finds the *Blessed Martyr* in my Writings, he will be very hoarse long before he gets through them.

As for his bringing himself off from that *crude*, not to call it *prose* reflection on a whole Kingdom, tis ill nature in me to take notice of it, since I hear all cry shame on him for it; for his contracting what he laid indefinitely on a whole Kingdom, to a few persons, a Figure well becoming his Wit and Candor. His ranking me with a Man whose Face I do not so much as know, is another of his Flowers; he may perhaps hear more of him than I can tell him, from one that Lodged so long at *Nat. Thompson's*, if he happened to be in his House when he Printed the Appeal from the City to the Country, in which I have been told *Ferguson* had a hand.

As for the Zeal that all this sort of Men pretend for the Crown, the Book that is the foundation of this Stir, is a good Indication of it, which without any straining, falls so evidently within a *Præmunire*, as I hear an Honourable Person has observed, that the Writer owes his not being questioned for it to His Majesties Clemency, and to the neglect that both he and his Book are under. There is another Sect beside *Presbytery*, that has first degraded Kings wholly from their Ecclesiastical Supremacy, and after that point was gained, made them reign at the Mercy of the Church, and at the Pope's Courtesy: It were too bold to attempt both at once, and it is ingeniously enough done, to seem to yield up the one wholly, till the other is gain'd. But in all this matter their *Honest Mr. Lowth* is quite forsaken, since his false charging me for leaving out that passage of *Leighton's* is not so much as pretended to be justified: it seems this Writer is very scant of Epithets, or thinks there are few that can fit *Mr. Lowth*, that he has no other for him in both his Letters but *Honest*, so that one would think it is a part of his Christian Name. *Episteter* are chosen with relation to the matter in hand: Now, though he may be a very honest Man in all other things for ought I know, yet I

am sure he was neither *Wise* nor *Honest* in this particular; but seems his Friends that set him on, think they are bound in honour to fetch him off.

I confess this Trifler is modester than he was, for whereas he, Sir *Harlowe* like, valued himself, that *the King of Israel was not to go out against a Flea*; this Writer more humbly compares his Letter to *Flea in my Ear*: but how *Fleas* are so much in their favour, I do not know; the last was a truer Figure for an Animal of a high form had suffer'd by the comparison: But, with my Readers Pardon I will venture to take it a little lower, and assure him it is as good as if it had been shut up in a Microscope a Week. I do not blame him rising a little higher in another Figure taken from the Marble; at his top-flight, and it were pity to see a whole Sheet without touch that can be calumniated with *Wit*. So far have I complied with your desires, in contradiction to my own Inclination: I am in this matter is at an end, so let the whole Pack bark as long as they will, I will not write one word more on this subject. I am with possible respect and duty,

Jan. 24.

Sir,

Your most humble Servant

G. Burnett.

L O N D O N, Printed for Richard Baldwyn, at the  
Old-Baily Corner. 1685.